



Department of Justice

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HOGSETT ANNOUNCES SENTENCE OF 4 YEARS FOR PARKER CITY MAN ON FEDERAL GUN CHARGES

U.S. Attorney says prosecution part of office's strategy to reduce violent crime in area

INDIANAPOLIS – Joseph H. Hogsett, the United States Attorney, announced today that Charles F. Ludington, age 62, of Parker City, has been sentenced to 48 months (4 years) in federal prison by District Judge Tanya Walton Pratt. This follows Ludington's plea of guilty to numerous federal firearms charges relating to his ownership and management of a Parker City firearms store.

"Mr. Ludington's conduct and behavior in this case has the unfortunate effect of giving responsible firearms dealers – and law-abiding gun owners – a bad name," Hogsett said. "This prosecution represents an important step forward in our ongoing effort to reduce violent crime by keeping firearms out of the hands of individuals who have no legal right to possess one. This is particularly true of convicted felons, who are more likely to misuse a gun in criminal activity."

According to Assistant U.S. Attorney Matthew J. Rinka, who prosecuted the case for the government, Judge Walton Pratt also ordered that Ludington forfeit the 4,276 firearms, nearly 600,000 rounds of ammunition, and more than \$159,000 in cash that were seized by ATF from Ludco Gun Shop in April of 2011.

Charles F. "Fred" Ludington was the sole owner of Ludco Gun Shop, a federally licensed firearms dealer located in Parker City. Between August and November of 2010, Ludington's firearms dealership underwent a routine, periodic audit conducted by agents of the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives (ATF). During the course of that audit, ATF inspectors discovered that Ludington had acquired but could not account for 997 firearms that were recorded in his inventory.

This audit revealed a whole host of problems. Ninety-three firearms were located in the physical inventory that had not been logged into the record. In more than two-dozen instances, a

firearm was found in physical inventory but the record reflected the firearm has been sold. Inspectors also uncovered documents suggesting that, on at least seven occasions, Ludco sold firearms to persons who were prohibited by federal law from possessing them. Ludington was additionally cited with selling a handgun to an out of state resident in violation of federal law, and numerous other regulatory and record keeping violations. At the conclusion of the audit, the inspectors issued Ludington a warning not to engage in such unlawful conduct in the future.

As a result of this audit, an investigation was initiated in January of 2011. On five separate occasions between January and March 2011, undercover Indiana State Police detectives, ATF agents, and a confidential informant went to Ludco posing as customers. On each of those occasions, Ludington sold firearms despite the fact that someone other than the actual purchaser of the firearms was filling out the mandatory paperwork. This practice is commonly referred to as a "straw purchase."

In three of those instances, an informant (who is also a convicted felon) informed Ludington that he wanted to purchase a firearm. Ludington knew the purchaser was a convicted felon, yet sold the firearm anyway. Ludington assisted an undercover ATF agent, acting as a straw purchaser, in filling out the required paperwork for the firearms the convicted felon wanted to buy.

During the course of the undercover investigation, Ludington allowed the felon to purchase two 9mm pistols, two 7.62x39mm assault rifles, a 9mm assault rifle, and a .45 caliber revolver capable of firing a 410 shotgun shell.

This case was the result of a collaborative investigation by the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives and the Indiana State Police as part of the U.S. Attorney's Violent Crime Initiative (VCI).

Announced in March of 2011, the VCI represents a district-wide strategy to work with local law enforcement and county prosecutors to combat drug traffickers and criminals that use and carry firearms in their illegal activities. In the first nine months of the initiative, the VCI produced a dramatic increase in the number of gun-related charges brought federally – from just 14 felony possession charges in 2010 to 103 last year.

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